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ABSTRACT

The Family to Family initiative has encouraged states to reconceptualize, redesign, and reconstruct their foster care systems. By 1996, the initiative was being implemented in five states, five Georgia counties, and Los Angeles County, California. The first objective of this initiative is to develop a network of family foster care that is more neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities where the children live. It calls for child welfare agencies to develop partnerships with the communities from which the children came. This report describes the ways in which communities have worked to build community partnerships and draws some lessons from their efforts as a guide to others. Three major strategies have been used to develop better working relationships with the community: (1) empowering the community to share child welfare work; (2) joint training for child welfare and community representatives; and (3) developing and maintaining a visible presence in the community, including working on the community's agenda. The most important element needed to develop working partnerships with the community is the commitment of child welfare agency leadership. Once discussions begin, leaders need strength and community support to change the ways their agencies do business. Thirteen appendixes are available on computer diskette from the Annie E. Casey Foundation. (Contains 1 17-item annotated bibliography.) (SLD)

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# Family to Family

TOOLS FOR
Rebuilding Foster Care

# Building Partnerships with Neighborhoods and Local Communities

PART ONE

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN CHILD WELFARE

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Family TO Family
TOOLS FOR
Rebuilding Foster Care

# Building Partnerships with Neighborhoods and Local Communities

BUILDING COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN CHILD WELFARE, PART ONE

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# INTRODUCTION

## The Annie E. Casey Foundation's Mission in Child Welfare

The Annie E. Casey Foundation was established in 1948 by Jim Casey, a founder of United Parcel Service, and his sister and brothers, who named the Foundation in honor of their mother. The primary mission of the Foundation is to foster public policies, human service reforms, and community supports that better meet the needs of vulnerable families.

The Foundation's work in child welfare is grounded in two fundamental convictions. First, there is no substitute for strong families to ensure that children grow up to be capable adults. Second, the ability of families to raise children is often inextricably linked to conditions in their communities.

The Foundation's goal in child welfare is to help neighborhoods build effective responses to families and children at risk of abuse or neglect. The Foundation believes that these community-centered responses can better protect children, support families, and strengthen communities.

Helping distressed neighborhoods become environments that foster strong, capable families is a complex challenge that will require transformation in many areas. Family foster care, the mainstay of all public child welfare systems, is in critical need of such transformation.

## The *Family to Family* Initiative

With changes in policy, in the use of resources, and in program implementation, family foster care can respond to children's need for out-of-home placement and be a less expensive and often more appropriate choice than institutions or other group settings.

This reform by itself can yield important benefits for families and children, although it is only one part of a larger effort to address the overall well-being of children and families in need of child protective services.

***Family to Family*** was designed in 1992 in consultation with national experts in child welfare. In keeping with the Annie E. Casey Foundation's guiding principles, the framework for the initiative is grounded in the belief that family foster care must take a more family-centered approach that is: (1) tailored to the individual needs of children and their families, (2) rooted in the child's community or neighborhood, (3) sensitive to cultural differences, and (4) able to serve many of the children now placed in group homes and institutions.

*The Foundation's goal in child welfare is to help neighborhoods build effective responses to families and children at risk of abuse or neglect.*

The ***Family to Family*** Initiative has encouraged states to reconceptualize, redesign, and reconstruct their foster care system to achieve the following new system-wide goals:

- ❒ To develop a network of family foster care that is more neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities where the children live;
- ❒ To assure that scarce family foster home resources are provided to all those children (and only to those children) who in fact must be removed from their homes;
- ❒ To reduce reliance on institutional or congregate care (in hospitals, psychiatric centers, correctional facilities, residential treatment programs, and group homes) by meeting the needs of many more of the children in those settings through family foster care;
- ❒ To increase the number and quality of foster families to meet projected needs;
- ❒ To reunite children with their families as soon as that can safely be accomplished, based on the family's and children's needs, not the system's time frames;
- ❒ To reduce the lengths of children's stay in out-of-home care; and
- ❒ To decrease the overall number of children coming into out-of-home care.

With these goals in mind, the Foundation selected and funded three states (Alabama, New Mexico, and Ohio) and five Georgia counties in August 1993, and two additional states (Maryland and Pennsylvania) in February 1994. Los Angeles County was awarded a planning grant in August 1996. States and counties funded through this Initiative were asked to develop family-centered, neighborhood-based family foster care systems within one or more local areas.

Communities targeted for the initiative were to be those with a history of placing large numbers of children out of their homes. The sites would then become the first phase of implementation of the newly conceptualized family foster care system throughout the state.

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**The Tools of *Family to Family***

All of us involved in ***Family to Family*** quickly became aware that new paradigms, policies, and organizational structures were not enough to both make and sustain substantive change in the way society protects children and supports families. New ways of actually doing the work needed to be put in place in the real world. During 1996, therefore, the Foundation and ***Family to Family*** grantees together developed a set of tools that we believe will help others build a neighborhood-based family foster care system. In our minds, such tools are indispensable elements of real change in child welfare.

The tools of ***Family to Family*** include the following:

- ❒ Ways to recruit, train, and support foster families;
- ❒ A decisionmaking model for placement in child protection;
- ❒ A model to recruit and support relative caregivers;
- ❒ New information system approaches and analytic methods;
- ❒ A self-evaluation model;
- ❒ Ways to build partnerships between public child welfare agencies and the communities they serve;
- ❒ New approaches to substance abuse treatment in a public child welfare setting;
- ❒ A model to confront burnout and build resilience among child protection staff;
- ❒ Communications planning in a public child protection environment;
- ❒ A model for partnerships between public and private agencies;
- ❒ Ways to link the world of child welfare agencies and correctional systems to support family resilience; and
- ❒ Proven models that move children home or to other permanent families.

*New ways of actually doing the work needed to be put in place in the real world.*

We hope that child welfare leaders and practitioners find one or more of these tools of use. We offer them with great respect to those who often receive few rewards for doing this most difficult work.

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# BUILDING PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY

***The family, neighborhood and community-based organizations are mediating structures, which offer new approaches to public understanding and new knowledge of the delivery of...services that is sure to benefit the entire society. To make the proper use of these indigenous resources requires, of course, a painful rethinking of the way public policy is developed.***

– Bob Woodson, *A Summons to Life*.

Most of us know the numbers and are familiar with the main outline of the problem. In many child welfare jurisdictions there are simply not enough foster homes to keep up with demand. It is often difficult, if not impossible, to place children near their home communities. Children entering foster care are frequently placed far from their neighborhoods with foster families who know little about the children or their families and little about their strengths, culture, neighborhood, and roots.

Given such a situation, foster parents and birth parents traditionally do not communicate effectively. Not knowing much about each other, they often distrust and fear one another. Although our ultimate goal is the reunification of the family, two of the most important forces in a placed child's life – his birth family and foster family – are frequently operating at odds with one another.

From a very simple point of view, the ***Family to Family*** Initiative seeks to reverse this trend. The Initiative's first objective ("To develop a network of family foster care that is more neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities where the children live") calls for child welfare agencies to develop partnerships with the communities from which children come.

It is, however, important to realize that the effort to recruit more neighborhood-based foster homes is not a one-faceted recruitment project. In fact most ***Family to Family*** staff would argue that the Initiative is not a "project" at all. At its core, it represents a re-thinking and re-onentation of the manner in which child welfare work is conducted. The development of neighborhood-based foster care, in the words of one veteran ***Family to Family*** staff member, is "a window of opportunity to reform the system":

> Neighborhood foster care is at the heart of the major reform effort taking place in Cuyahoga County... Neighborhood-based foster care makes it possible for the child to be placed in close proximity to [the] family. Neighborhood-based foster parents are trained to help the child stay in regular contact with the family to the degree that it is safe to do so. Neighborhood foster care is being constructed on a base of neighborhood sponsorship, which includes neighborhood centers, schools, churches, counseling, and mediation centers as well as neighborhood housing and economic groups. The neighborhood sponsors are responsible for the recruitment of foster homes and for the development of services needed by birth families to resolve their issues and reunify with their children. CFS staff are being reassigned to specific neighborhoods in order to become part of the neighborhood support network for neighborhood children, their families, and foster families. ("Mission Statement," Cuyahoga

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County, Cleveland, Ohio, Department of Children and Family Services, February 1995.)

Developing true working partnerships with communities in neighborhoods has profound implications for the manner in which child welfare agencies do business. There is the need to be flexible, to open up the decision-making process to the community. If we want to engage communities and neighborhoods in the process of protecting their children, the traditional top-down bureaucratic decisionmaking process will not succeed. To gain the respect and cooperation of the community and neighborhood, child welfare leadership staff will have to let go of some old habits and ways of doing business. Rather than defining the needs of neighborhoods and communities and their children and families unilaterally, professionals will need to improve their listening skills. They will need to become comfortable with involving the community in child welfare decisionmaking.

First, child welfare agencies need to begin to see the children's neighborhood and communities as potential strengths, not just as deficit-ridden. Problems exist in many inner city communities, but many solid organizations and people also exist – church groups and settlement houses, small business owners and concerned neighbors – all with good values, willing and capable of supporting our children and families.

The following chart outlines core differences between traditional child welfare practices and ***Family to Family*** practices.

*Developing true working partnerships with communities in neighborhoods has profound implications for the manner in which child welfare agencies do business.*

| **Traditional Child Welfare Practice** | **Building Community Partnerships** |
|---|---|
| Focused on deficits of family and community | Strength-based |
| Wary of community involvement | Welcomes community role in decisions while ensuring the child's safety |
| Expects perfection | Accepts the vicissitudes of life |
| Comfortable with small, quiet meetings | Holds open meetings: creative chaos |
| Predictable | Gets diverse outcomes |
| Credentialed professionals in charge | Paraprofessionals and community are involved |
| Categorical funding | Flexible: Wraparound funding |
| Hierarchical decisionmaking | Team decisionmaking |
| Nine-to-five hours, in central office | Neighborhood presence; flexible hours |
| Agency develops and owns child welfare agenda | Ownership is shared with community |
| Focused on traditional child welfare agenda | Supports multiple community causes |
| Often has homogeneous values | Celebrates cultural diversity |



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*It will take rethinking and restructuring of many traditional child welfare policies and practices to build working partnerships with the community.*

It will take rethinking and restructuring of many traditional child welfare policies and practices to build working partnerships with the community. It is not a one-step, one-size-fits-all process or technique, but rather a journey toward beginning to see our families and their communities differently – not as "flawed" entities that we as professionals do something ***to or in*** (diagnose, intervene, treat, place, etc.), but as valued human resources.

Although far from perfect, communities have much to contribute as we all go about the struggle to keep children and families safe. To develop working partnerships with the community, we need to acknowledge and celebrate the fact that the professional community and our clients' community have much to offer one another. By listening to each other and including each other in discussions and decisions that affect children and families' lives, we can work more effectively together to protect children in their own homes and neighborhoods.

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## HOW PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE COMMUNITY WERE FORMED

Although a great deal of variation occurred in the manner that ***Family to Family*** sites created partnerships with neighborhoods and community groups, the following are six successful practices distilled from experience:

- ❒ Marketing and Sharing the ***Family to Family*** Vision;
- ❒ Defining the Community;
- ❒ Breaking Down Barriers;
- ❒ Developing a Contractual Relationship with Community Agencies;
- ❒ Developing Enriched Community Services/Interventions; and
- ❒ Proceeding with Geographic Assignment of Cases.

It may be somewhat inaccurate to characterize these six elements as "tools." They could be more aptly considered necessary steps in the process of developing working partnerships with the community.

In this paper, an effort has been made to concentrate on practical lessons, providing examples of specific tools that grew out of the ***Family to Family*** sites' collective experience developing partnerships with neighborhood and community groups.

### Marketing and Sharing the *Family to Family* Vision: The Need for a Participatory Planning Process

***Family to Family*** sites differed in the ways that they accomplished the objectives of the initiative, but each site in a thoughtful and detailed manner developed a participatory comprehensive planning and implementation process. Although most jurisdictions needed to modify and update their plans, the commitment to a participatory planning process was essential.

From the start, the inclusion of a broad array of community representatives in the development of local ***Family to Family*** plans made it clear that the relationship of the public agency to the community would undergo fundamental change. The Initiative's goal of developing neighborhood-based foster care thus became both an end (objective) and a means by which the agency began to change the way it made plans, used data and made decisions.

This comprehensive planning process served a number of very important purposes:

- ❒ Since it was highly participatory, it provided an opportunity for the on-site leadership of the Initiative to share ***Family to Family*** goals with the staff of the child welfare agency. Before reaching out to the communities, attention was paid to getting the support and "buy-in" of the bureaucracy. Typically staff committees and work groups were established to work on different aspects of the Initiative. *(continued on next page)*

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- By its comprehensive nature, the planning process included links to other state and public agencies (creating cross-system reform) and to the community. Local planning groups or steering committees of traditional and non-traditional providers of services as well as community advocates were brought into the planning process.
- From the inception of the Initiative, a great deal of attention was paid to generating and using solid information and data. The sites were encouraged to develop specific, measurable objectives, with time frames for implementation. ***Family to Family*** sites were willing to be held accountable for their progress (or lack of progress).

*The terms "neighborhood" and "community" can be tricky to define.*

Perhaps the clearest result of this "Vision Setting" planning process was Cuyahoga County's efforts, as detailed in the County's 1993 ***Family to Family*** proposal:

**Goal #1.** To develop a network of family foster care that is more neighborhood-based, culturally sensitive, and located primarily in the communities in which the children live.

**Vision.** There will be a neighborhood-based, family-centered model of foster care in which the child's family, foster family, and the community drive the delivery of family foster care services. Program development will be a highly collaborative process, drawing on the broad base of community input (including other public systems and private child serving agencies). The neighborhood foster care model will allow the community to take ownership of the care of their children and youth....(p.8, 1993 Cuyahoga's Proposal to the Foundation.)

The child welfare agency not only developed this goal and vision but also committed itself to a concrete and measurable target of developing at least 50 neighborhood-based foster homes within the first three years.

By making a commitment to a participatory planning process that included the community, service providers, other public social service agencies and child welfare staff, the initiative modeled the behavior that it wished to implement.

### Defining the Community

The terms "neighborhood" and "community" can be tricky to define. (For purposes of this paper, neighborhoods are considered smaller geographical subsets of larger "communities.") If child welfare agencies are going to reach out to the community, they should have a concrete notion of what constitutes a community. Manageable and clearly understandable geographic boundaries should be placed on local efforts to develop working relationships with neighborhood and community groups.

John McKnight in his article "Regenerating Community" (Appendix 1) offers this relevant definition of community:

> By community we mean the social place used by family, friends, neighbors, neighborhood associations, clubs, civic groups, local enterprises, churches, ethnic associations, temples, local unions, local government, and local media.

For McKnight a key definitional aspect of "community" is the existence of interdependent and voluntary local "associations." McKnight sees these community associations as able to respond quickly to community problems:

> A primary characteristic of people who need help is that their problem is created by unexpected tragedy, the surprise development, the sudden change. While they will be able to stabilize over the long run, what they need is immediate help. The rapid response capacity of associations, and their interconnectedness, allows for the possibility of

immediate and comprehensive assistance without first initiating a person into a system from which they may never leave.

Moreover, McKnight sees community associations as viewing each person as a unique individual, a local community resident:

> Because community associations are small, face-to-face groups, the relationship among members is very individualized. They also have the tradition of dealing with non-members *as individuals*. Institutions, on the other hand, have great difficulty developing programs or activities that recognize the unique characteristics of each individual. Therefore, associations represent unusual *tools* for creating "hand-tailored" responses to those who may be in special need or have unique fallibilities. (Emphasis added, "Regenerating Community.")

Cuyahoga County, in its RFP sent to community-based organizations offering to fund some of the costs associated with development of neighborhood-based foster care services, echoed some qualities of McKnight's definition of community. The County listed three criteria for "neighborhoods":

- ❒ Reasonable geographical boundaries that are consistent with the self-identification of families who live in the area;
- ❒ Familiar, educational, social, cultural, religious, commercial, and human service anchors/landmarks; and
- ❒ Formal and informal networks of friends, families, resources, and community leaders who identify with the neighborhood and have a stake in its future. (See Appendix 2, RFP for Neighborhood Foster Care Services, Cuyahoga County, pp. 2-3.)

Hamilton County (Cincinnati), Ohio, developed a different set of criteria for identifying and selecting a community. (See Appendix 3.) These criteria included:

- ❒ Number of children placed in agency foster care;
- ❒ Positive potential to recruit neighborhood foster homes;
- ❒ Receptivity to the initiative (community's leaders and organizations support the Initiative and are not caught up in turf battles); and accessibility of critical services; and
- ❒ Relative homogeneity of income, race and tradition (ideally the community identified itself as an intact community/area that shared many major characteristics and saw itself facing a common set of problems and issues).

After analysis of placement and other data, some jurisdictions (Philadelphia and Baltimore) used zip codes to geographically define "community."

The issue of defining "community" was resolved another way by Anne Arundel County, Md., a county of approximately 460,000 people:

> In Anne Arundel County, unlike Cleveland, we do not have any neighborhood centers or settlement houses, or anything that we could hook up initially to define our community. So we struggled in the initial stages around how would we define "community"?... And what we decided was that any time that a child had to be removed from their home and enter out-of-home care, the one thing we did not want to do was to have the child change school. So with this goal in mind, how we defined the community in Anne Arundel County was around

*It is a somewhat unpleasant fact, but it needs to be confronted: public child welfare agencies often have a negative reputation in the community.*



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*The case worker or the **Family to Family** community worker convenes the meeting, which includes the birth and foster parents, the worker, the child if she or he is old enough and the community representatives.*

the boundaries of the twelve public high schools... (Proceedings of "Engaging the Community Workshop," ***Family to Family*** Conference, December 5, 1996.)

Los Angeles County has adapted the boundaries of elementary schools as a way to define "community" there. Child welfare efforts to engage the community in Santa Fe, New Mexico have also taken on a strong school-based emphasis (see page 16).

Although different ***Family to Family*** sites defined the term "community" in different ways and used somewhat different criteria, families and service agencies in all sites within the geographic boundaries of a specific community considered themselves to be sharing a community-wide identity and were receptive to working with the public child welfare agency to improve outcomes for individual children and families from their own neighborhoods.

Endless discussions of where to draw exact community boundaries are not needed. Ideally, common sense can help drive the definitional process.

### Breaking Down Barriers – Connecting with the Community

It is a somewhat unpleasant fact, but it needs to be confronted: public child welfare agencies often have a negative reputation in the community. They are seen by some as "baby-snatchers" who needlessly disrupt families. Other community members see them as uncaring and distant bureaucracies with an endless stream of meaningless and complicated rules, unconnected to and unconcerned with the daily problems and issues of community people. Child welfare workers are often seen as knowing little, if anything, about the problems, cultural traditions, and people who live in the neighborhoods. Even foster parents feel at odds with the public child welfare agency.

To complicate matters, the media and politicians (often with few facts) criticize child welfare agencies for contributing to the harm that some children and infants suffer when they are inappropriately placed back with parents who subsequently abuse them again. Caught between the perceptions of being "baby-snatchers" and child-harmers, many child welfare agencies are now in a "bunker" mentality. Most often, the "bunker" is the county or state office building and the agency itself. If one stays in the bunker, one has no need to confront the negative perceptions of the community. But to develop working partnerships with the community, these attitudes and perceptions need to be confronted.

The following are three major strategies that ***Family to Family*** jurisdictions have used to develop better working relationships with the community:

### Major Strategy A: Empowering the Community to Share Child Welfare Work.

For partnerships to be effective, real work must be done. It is not enough to discuss cooperation; the community must perform concrete tasks and functions. In Baltimore, for example, one ***Family to Family*** staff member organized a large Steering Committee of more than 180 citizens, private agencies, churches, public agencies, schools and universities, and others who lived or worked in the targeted ***Family to Family*** community. The Steering Committee included foster families as well as families who were consumers of child welfare's services. The ***Family to Family*** staff organized such a large group by being willing to spend time in the community after working hours and attending a number of meetings of local organizations. The staff member made an effort to get to know people within the targeted community. (It helped that he is a long-term area resident.)

Initially the Steering Committee functioned as a way to inform the community about the goals and objectives of the Initiative. Soon a

smaller subset of the committee became a ***Family to Family*** stakeholders group, which advised the agency on the direction and objectives of the initiative. The Steering Committee, which met once a month, decided later to concentrate on helping to prevent referrals to the child welfare agency and on attempting to get additional substance-abuse services for the community.

The Steering Committee helped implement ***Family to Family*** objectives in a number of specific ways:

- ❒ It supported and participated in the recruitment of neighborhood-based foster care;
- ❒ With the homeowners association as a member, it helped get needed home renovations for renters and homeowners who had applied to be foster care parents but needed physical renovations of their residences; and
- ❒ It helped the agency reduce the length of stay in foster care for children who entered the system from the community. (See Appendix 4 for a copy of the Baltimore Community Screening form.)

**Using the Community Steering Committee to Shorten Length of Stay.** Five days after any child from the Baltimore Steering Committee's neighborhood enters foster care, a small subgroup (six to eight members) is convened to screen the placement and review plans for reunification. Members of the group are chosen because of their potential to support the birth and foster family. The caseworker or the ***Family to Family*** community worker convenes the meeting, which includes the birth and foster parents, the worker, the child (if she or he is old enough), and the community representatives.

Although it takes work to arrange the meeting, the agency reports that in the long run the process is effective at helping to stimulate timely reunification. A wider range of community supports and services are connected to the family and more creative use of wrap-around services occurs. The meeting also serves to ensure that the public child welfare agency is doing its best to help effect reunification.

The meeting is repeated at 30-day intervals in order to ensure accountable follow-up. Child welfare caseworkers needed initial support and training in order to be able to share case decisionmaking with the community.

A similar procedure is used in New Mexico at the initial gatekeeping meeting to help divert children from placement. (For a description of the New Mexico experience, see ***Family to Family*** "Team Meetings as a Decisionmaking Tool" paper, p. 14.)

**Major Strategy B. Joint Training for Child Welfare and Community Representatives.**

Cincinnati, Ohio decided to confront directly the lack of trust between the public child welfare agency and the community by convening meetings with community representatives and agency personnel to identify barriers to effective collaboration and solutions. Child welfare staff assigned to a particular community, the lead agency from that community (Santa Maria), and community representatives met to discuss their relationship with the assistance of a trained facilitator. From this (and meetings like this) a number of specific steps were developed that helped to improve the relationship between the agency and the community. These included joint training, participation by the community in gatekeeping, cultural diversity training for public child welfare staff, a series of informal joint meetings, community representative participation in agency meetings, etc. (See Appendix 5.)

*Barriers between the child welfare agency and the community can be effectively broken down – if there is a solid commitment to develop true partnerships built on working relationships.*

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*...they were seen by community residents as "mediating structures," indigenous community resources that welcomed and advocated for and represented local residents.*

**Major Strategy C. Developing and Maintaining a Visible Presence in the Community – Working on the Community's Agenda.**

*"Can't be a partner if you don't show up."*
– Baltimore ***Family to Family*** worker.

Perhaps the simplest way to break down the "bunker" mentality is for individual child welfare staff members to become known and involved in the activities, issues and problems of the community. This means sharing the work of the community with community members. It also often means engaging in a variety of non-traditional child welfare tasks. For example, in many ***Family to Family*** sites, child welfare workers joined community agencies and volunteers to help sponsor and do the work of planning and running community events. ***Family to Family*** workers regularly helped run community health fairs, local job fairs, local neighborhood celebrations, and recreation center-sponsored events. Although these efforts were often labor intensive, the benefits outweighed the inconvenience. It is hard to distrust a public agency when its staff is helping to provide the food and plan the children's games for a summer festival.

The child welfare agency stops being "faceless" and "uncaring" when individual staff members roll up their sleeves and work side by side with community activists at a job or health fair, or when a child welfare staff worker plans and cooks a dinner for local foster parents, birth parents and children and neighbors at the neighborhood Salvation Army's facility. By participating in these kinds of activities, child welfare workers actively demonstrate that they are willing to do the work of partnership – not just the talk. They can also get the word out to the community about efforts to recruit neighborhood foster families.

**Santa Fe – The Connection to Schools and the Community.** To stimulate a full partnership with the community, the Santa Fe County Office of the New Mexico Department of Children, Youth and Families implemented a number of specific steps. First, every county child welfare staff member was encouraged to join one of three working committees: Recruitment and Retention of Foster Parents; the Internal Resource Committee; or the Community Development Committee. The Community Development Committee worked at furthering positive relationships with the local community. Like other ***Family to Family*** sites, it sponsored local fairs, maintained a speaker's bureau (providing speakers for local organizations and events) and, through a relationship with a local church, supported positive activities for teenagers. (See Appendix 6.)

Santa Fe's efforts did not stop there. The agency began aggressive outreach to each public elementary, middle, and junior high school in Santa Fe. One staff person from the county child welfare office was assigned as liaison to each school; the liaison meets regularly with school personnel on a formal and informal basis. Informational meetings are held at school to explain the goals of the initiative. Child welfare staff respond to questions and parenting effectiveness workshops are offered to parents. Staff members are also involved informally with teachers and school counselors to help families who are in need but who have not necessarily been referred to the child welfare agency. (See Appendix 7.)

One event that gained much positive exposure for ***Family to Family***'s efforts in Santa Fe was a Career Day at the DeVargas Junior High. The Career Day, "Girls Can Make a Difference" was planned for and aimed at adolescent girls. Speakers included successful women from diverse careers: a judge, a pediatrician, a horse trainer, a writer, and a local television news anchor who was a graduate of the school.

Traditionalists might have difficulty seeing the relevance of child welfare sponsorship of such an event. However, the Career Day came about through a local effort (Chicas


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of the 90s) to promote self-esteem, responsible decisionmaking, and healthy relationships for teen girls – issues with a high degree of relevance for child welfare agencies.

> One day we asked the girls what careers they wanted to pursue and not one girl shared a future dream. We believe it is very important for adolescent girls to not only think about who they are but who they want to become and to realize that their opportunities are limitless. This day is intended to encourage girls to build on their own creativity and vibrant energy, to acknowledge their unique gifts and talents and to pursue their wildest dreams. (From "Girls Can Make a Difference," Conference materials; see Appendix 7.)

An effort like this has a number of direct benefits for a child welfare agency. In addition to helping recruit neighborhood foster families, cooperation with schools helps to change the community's perceptions about the role and function of public child welfare agencies. In particular, the job fair for adolescent girls helped build the self-esteem of girls from the community and directly helped combat the problem of teenage pregnancies.

Barriers between the child welfare agency and the community can be effectively broken down – if there is a solid commitment to develop true partnerships built on working relationships. To develop these working relationships, child welfare workers should "just show up" in the community and become involved in and committed to issues that the community sees as important. The more case workers are visible and participate with the community on mutually important issues, the more the community and child welfare agency can build and sustain effective collaborations to help keep the community's children and families safe.

**Developing Contractual Relationships With Community Agencies**

Philadelphia, Los Angeles, and Hamilton and Cuyahoga counties in Ohio are four ***Family to Family*** sites that developed contractual relationships with specific community-based agencies to help further the goals of the initiative. In three of these sites, the public child welfare agency contracted with specific community-based organizations to help recruit, train, and support a network of neighborhood-based foster homes. In Los Angeles, the agency contracted with neighborhood organizations for all its family preservation activities.

Depending on the jurisdiction, community-based organizations that were selected included long-standing social service agencies with a commitment to and track record of providing a variety of social services within a particular community, and more grassroots organizations (settlement houses) that had strong community identification – often with a demonstrated commitment to local economic development.

These community-based agencies were in and of (and identified with) a specific community. To use Bob Woodson's phrase, they were seen by community residents as "mediating structures," indigenous community resources that welcomed and advocated for and represented local residents. Most of the agencies selected as ***Family to Family*** "hubs" had existing services and staff that worked with troubled children and families. The agencies typically also sponsored family-centered cultural and educational activities (e.g., after school programs, summer day camps, support groups, teen programs, etc.). These agencies were places in the neighborhood that families went to in order to have fun or participate in enriching activities. (See Appendix 8 for examples of programs and services available at ***Family to Family*** community-based organizations.)

*The neighborhood-based agencies become centers of support for both birth and foster parents.*

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*Collaboration with neighborhood groups opens up many new and creative avenues for individualized services.*

Some of the important benefits of developing a ***Family to Family*** relationship with a local community agency were eloquently summarized by a Santa Maria staff member (Santa Maria is a ***Family to Family*** neighborhood agency in Hamilton County):

> Of course [since we are in the community] we can do much more intensive *[and immediate] outreach...[we can]* create intimate space for people... with our parent groups, we have selected rooms that pull them together... *[we can]* be *nurturing*. People come to us when they have little emotional reserve left...we can take as a primary goal to be genuine and appropriate, commenting on [their] successes... We are hands-on, [a] supportive *network... [we can offer]* enrichment. Many families have had their life styles completely depleted...We took children to the zoo...we took parents to the library and showed them how to use the free resources, how to use our museums on days when there was free entry...We *empowered* those parents... I believe most strongly in open membership...the criteria was not just families from Children's Services. We have members from the community...We don't want to move to the suburbs when the "gentry" comes in to "gentrify" poverty areas. *We want to be a partner [with the community]; we want to be a team...* (See ***Family to Family***, 1996 Conference Proceedings, "Engaging the Community Workshop," pp.18-22, edited, emphasis added.)

No matter how well intentioned, it is difficult for any centralized bureaucracy to fill the community/neighborhood roles that the Santa Maria staff spoke of. Civil service rules, legislative and funding requirements, physical, cultural and psychological distance from the community and its residents, as well as competing political pressures, all work to separate a bureaucracy from the community. An agency can, however, shorten this distance by developing working partnerships with neighborhood agencies, helping empower them to keep neighborhood children and families safe.

Community-based organizations that developed contractual relationships with ***Family to Family*** agencies were encouraged to build strong local collaborations and networks. The "participatory" planning process that helped develop ***Family to Family*** in a jurisdiction served as a model for local area/neighborhood planning and service collaborations. No one agency was expected to "be the answer" in any one neighborhood. The initial Cuyahoga Request for Proposal stated:

> It is neither likely or desired for a single agency...within a neighborhood to provide all the service necessary... Instead it is expected that a comprehensive network of existing services and informal supports will be brought into the fold and working relationships established to deliver an array of service options. Organizations wishing to apply are discouraged from thinking that they can do it all; rather, they are encouraged to identify the best methods that can be developed to bring together the vast array of resources that exist in a community that support, nurture and build the strengths of children and their two families – primary and foster. It is essential that organizations look beyond their own walls and inventory all potential resources in the community... (Cuyahoga County Department of Children and Family Services, RFP for Neighborhood Foster Care Services, p. 3, Appendix 2)



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**Mapping Neighborhood Assets: Creating Local Resource Guides** To help ensure that the lead community agencies "look beyond their own walls," local ***Family to Family*** community sites compiled thorough Resource Guides or program information about services within the targeted community. These guides included information on hotlines, advocacy groups, AA groups, churches, recreation centers, and services for children, families, and older folks that were accessible within the local ***Family to Family*** site. Compiling these guides helped to educate the community about the intent of the initiative as well as the extent of local services. (Appendix 9 contains examples from the Introductions and the Table of Contents from two such "Guides." Appendix 10, "Getting Connected: How to Find Out About Groups and Organizations in Your Neighborhood," is a helpful publication for anyone considering compiling a guide book of formal and informal neighborhood agencies and associations.)

It is through collaboration and cooperation among local agencies that ***Family to Family*** principles and practices will grow and become ingrained in the practices of the child welfare bureaucracy. To help ensure the growth and success of neighborhood-based child welfare practices, the contracted agencies in Philadelphia formed a community-wide steering committee comprised of representatives from the local community agencies and child welfare staff who supervise cases from that area. In addition, the executive directors of the nine contracted neighborhood organizations have formed an executive committee that meets regularly with the city's child welfare leader to advise them on next steps for ***Family to Family***.

**Developing Enriched Community Services/Interventions**

As child welfare agencies develop working partnerships with community agencies, a rich programmatic synergy takes place. Case workers become knowledgeable about the existence of neighborhood-based services that many families need in order to achieve reunification. Parents and foster parents from the neighborhoods begin to use local services not as referred clients but as neighborhood consumers. Formal and informal support groups for parents and foster parents are set up at the neighborhood level.

In effect, the neighborhood-based agencies become centers of support for both birth and foster parents. ***Family to Family*** community agencies develop and sponsor a wide range of programs for birth families and foster families (e.g., support groups, housing assistance, health programs, parent effectiveness training, respite care, substance abuse treatment, family counseling, teen activities, tutoring and GED classes, training for foster parents, etc.). Many agencies maintain food pantries and job banks. And of course the community agencies serve as the center for recruitment and training of neighborhood-based foster parents. Caseworkers begin using the community agencies as a site to meet with parents and foster parents, while visits with birth (and often foster parents) and team meetings are held at neighborhood agencies.

New services and new local organizations are soon incorporated into ***Family to Family*** collaborations. Working on neighborhood-based front-end and prevention services helps cement the relationship between agency staff and the community. At one Initiative site, a public housing authority became involved in helping to form a residents' council, sponsor a family support center and advocate for additional local substance abuse services. In another site, weekend and overnight respite services for

*Placing a child with a neighborhood foster parent who is also receiving support from a local community-based agency helps to ensure that the first placement becomes the child's last.*

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adolescent girls (modeled on a pajama party) were developed.

One unique example of program collaboration and development occurred in Hamilton County. There the child welfare agency, the Metropolitan Housing Authority, and the University of Cincinnati (with the active cooperation of the local school district) developed an after-school and summer educational enrichment program (Project Learn) for children in elementary through high school. Many were in neighborhood-based foster care and were referred to the program by the public child welfare agency. The program is run by the University of Cincinnati's Department of Education faculty and employs student interns from the University. (See Appendix 11 for Project Learn materials.)

The benefits of an intensive neighborhood approach to services are aptly summarized by Sister Mary Jane Janchill of the Center for Family Life:

> Neighborhood foster care is more than the match of a birth family and a foster family in the same neighborhood; it is a program and service that ties the child and parents with the primary resources of the community such as health, income supports, employment, education...
>
> The neighborhood foster family... program, actually located in the same community (rather than operating from a centralized location), thus has a specific community base from which it can offer a comprehensive, flexible, accessible, family service plan. Its location makes extended hours...in the community possible... [T]he Center for Family Life is available for indefinite periods of time after termination of the foster care service itself. Parents, children, and foster parents can make use of any of the Center's services for whatever period of time might be needed. Utilization of any of the Center's programs then becomes voluntary, rather than mandated 'aftercare'. (See Appendix 12, "Neighborhood Foster Care," Center for Family Life, Sunset Park, January 1997.)

*Geographic assignment is a fundamental condition/ criteria for neighborhood partnerships to flourish.*

Collaboration with neighborhood groups opens up many new and creative avenues for individualized services. Unlimited by traditional slot-driven services, the family, neighbors, and local groups can tailor their help to fit the parent and child. For example, if a mother needs to learn how to set consistent limits for her aggressive child, traditional parenting classes may not work. Individuals who spend time, perhaps daily, with the child and mother to coach them as they practice new behaviors might more effectively meet the family's need. This kind of in-home and neighborhood-based support could be provided by a neighbor or church member who has received training and supervision from a community-based organization like Center for Family Life.

Collaboration with neighborhood-based supports enables child welfare workers to avoid the common trap of choosing between the child's safety needs and the child's attachment needs. The child can either remain at home with his/her parent with appropriate local supports or remain in the neighborhood, either in kinship or neighborhood-based foster care. Placing a child with a neighborhood foster parent who is also receiving support from a local community-based agency helps to ensure that the first placement becomes the child's last. The birth family, neighborhood foster parent, community-based agency, and child welfare worker can work as a team to ensure the child's safety while timely reunification efforts take place.

Collaboration with the community also results in enduring support for a family after the child welfare case is closed. Working with churches, volunteers, local AA/NA meetings, and other community groups helps families to connect to neighborhood support networks that will remain accessible.



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### Proceeding with Geographic Assignment of Child Welfare Cases

Number one, you can do what we've done for years. You can say we are organizing ourselves to provide family-centered work that's good basic child welfare practice...And that's what we [have] done. We haven't paid too much attention to those elements that affect that family beyond the family members. That's the way most of us have been organized. You can also organize yourself [geographically] – just draw some lines through your county...just divide [the] county into quadrants and [say] you're assigned here, you're assigned here. It's an administrative mechanism. It does not take advantage of what exists in that community to partner with, to work with – because the ultimate question...is the day that we close that case, when the case leaves our system, what is out there for that family so that the family will get supported and be able to parent their children and not come back into the [system]?...[T]he third option ...that we are talking about is family-centered community-based work which combines excellent family-centered work and the community-based part of it *which is linked together.* (Jan Flory, Proceedings of "Engaging the Community Workshop," December 5, 1996, ***Family to Family*** Conference, p. 46. Edited, emphasis added.)

There are several advantages to assigning workers to neighborhoods. Workers can become more knowledgeable about the areas. They become advocates and recruiters for neighborhood-based foster parents. They can work as true team members with local providers of services, foster parents, and families. Working in neighborhoods allows caseworkers to see more families in a given time frame; by connecting with neighborhood service providers, they can use a neighborhood office for family visits, for meetings with foster and birth parents, and for formal and informal training.

A neighborhood locus for child welfare work encourages the development of long-term supports for families and easier access to services. When families, neighborhood foster families and community individuals providing support for a family meet with the child welfare worker in the neighborhood, families feel more at ease. Many ***Family to Family*** jurisdictions are regularly scheduling formal and informal team meetings of birth families and neighborhood foster parents at neighborhood-based centers.

For the child welfare agency, geographic assignment of cases helps to break down erroneous perceptions of the agency role and helps build better relationships with the community. (See Appendix 13 for a Summary of benefits of geographic assignment, prepared by staff of the Cuyahoga County's Department of Children and Family Services.)

Geographic assignment of workers and their caseloads to the community is a natural outgrowth of developing true partnerships with the community. Geographic assignment is a fundamental condition/criteria for neighborhood partnerships to flourish.

*As relationships with the community are strengthened, more of an agency's early intervention work can be taken on by and in the community.*

**Necessary Steps Toward Achieving Geographic Assignment of Cases**

- ❒ Deciding on the geographic boundaries of the community and aligning active cases within those boundaries; verifying current addresses of families in care to ensure equitable distribution of case loads and child welfare staff.

*(continued on next page)*



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*The most important element needed to develop working partnerships with the community is the commitment of child welfare agency leadership – leadership willing to risk and to change.*

**Necessary Steps Toward Achieving Geographic Assignment of Cases** *(cont'd)*

- ❒ Developing a time frame and procedures to transfer cases. In large systems, this should be a deliberate and time-lined "phase-in plan" that starts with communities where other critical elements of neighborhood-based services have had time to take hold and show success (e.g., contracting with neighborhood organizations). A case transfer policy should be developed to ensure that the original worker and the new worker can meet with the family, the foster family, and community providers to discuss continuity of care. A policy also needs to be developed for cases where families move to another part of the city.

- ❒ Defining changing worker roles. When child welfare workers move to the neighborhood, they reallocate their time from crisis management to building support for neighborhood-based care, meeting with local individuals and groups. They may find themselves helping to develop community newsletters and participating in open community forums. Rather than seeing themselves as being the only professionals responsible for a case, they begin to extend their knowledge of the positive forces within their neighborhoods; they convene neighborhood folks (extended family, neighbors, foster parents, neighborhood service providers, clergy, etc.) to design specific supports that address the needs of individual families. They help to advocate new services for the community. In short, they become generalists, retaining case management responsibility for formal cases but helping to advocate and organize neighborhood-based supports for children and families from that neighborhood.

- ❒ Defining the role of community providers of services. Many different neighborhood providers of service may participate in helping one family, but for open abuse and neglect cases, the neighborhood-based child welfare worker remains the case manager, responsible for developing and implementing a specific intervention plan and for reporting to the court. In cases where a family voluntarily requests services, the neighborhood-based child welfare worker may become part of a neighborhood-based team without having to open an official case.

- ❒ Training of caseworkers and child welfare supervisors. Convening team meetings, collaborating with neighborhood groups to develop individualized service plans, working out of a neighborhood center, etc. often means that workers need to learn new skills or refine their existing skills. Training also needs to be targeted at supervisors to help them become comfortable managing a neighborhood-based staff.

- ❒ Joint training is also useful for staff from neighborhood agencies and child welfare staff. When child welfare staff participate in training (for example, on domestic violence or on arranging and supervising visits) with staff from the local schools and from community-based agencies and with foster parents, they learn from one another and their potential as a team is deepened and enriched.

- ❒ Reinforcing/publicizing the value of neighborhood-based case work within the larger community. Leaders of the agency need to reinforce the rationale and values that drive neighborhood assignment with the jurisdiction's major political and social service stakeholders.


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## Next Steps

Many neighborhood-based child welfare staff people believe that the establishment of working partnerships with viable neighborhood and community organizations can help families raise and nurture healthy children and can over time lead to deeper and more meaningful child welfare reforms. As relationships with the community are strengthened, more of an agency's early intervention work can be taken on by and in the community. It might require some changes in state law, but it is also probable that strong community networks can investigate and follow up on selected complaints of neglect and abuse, thus reducing the flow of formal cases into the public child welfare agency. For example, in the ***Family to Family*** site in Savannah, Ga., caseworkers doing an investigation are accompanied by a ***Family to Family*** neighborhood advocate. Funding for such additional reforms could be made available by reinvesting the substantial resources committed to residential services in further refinement and development of neighborhood collaborations.

It will not be easy. In the emerging managed care (and child-welfare-for-profit) environment, more attention will have to be paid to developing solid outcome measures that document successes. Without clear and understandable outcome measures, some ***Family to Family*** advocates fear that the initiative will flourish while receiving private Foundation support and then fade when that is no longer forthcoming.

## HOW TO GET STARTED

The most important element needed to develop working partnerships with the community is the commitment of child welfare agency leadership – leadership willing to risk and to change. Individual leaders must see the crises in many of our urban child welfare systems (e.g., the lack of available foster homes, the disenfranchisement of many foster parents, the political movement favoring large residential services, etc.) as an opportunity for change. We can retreat to our bunkers or we can use the crises as an *opportunity* to begin talking to the community at large about the need to move in a different direction.

The agency can create a dialogue with the community and the major political stakeholders about building working relations with the community. In a sense, reaching out to the community to develop working partnerships helps to create a safe place for the leaders and staff of child welfare systems to discuss their relationship with the community and what it would take for neighborhoods to keep their children and families safe.

Once these discussions begin, leaders need strength and political support to change the way their agencies do business. Workers must be included in the process, confronted and trained and re-trained. Old ways of doing business will need to be abandoned; new skills and new flexible roles will have to be developed. Little successful inclusion or empowerment of the community will occur unless concrete child welfare responsibilities and resources (funding) are also shared with the community.

The leaders of child welfare systems will need to model the behavior that they wish to encourage. Leadership should be a visible part of the process of connecting with the community, of sharing decisionmaking, of developing more flexible roles. In managing this change process, it is important that child welfare leadership value the traditions and accomplishments of child welfare workers while a new community vision and direction are being developed. There should be little room to blame past actions or present efforts on anyone. If the community vision is to succeed, the focus will need to be on strengths (of staff, of community, of families), rather than deficits; on dialogue rather than dictum; on inclusion rather than exclusion.

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# REFERENCES

The following references, although not specifically indexed to the discussion in the text, offer a sampling of readings that provide additional information on innovative approaches to connecting child welfare interventions to the community. Included are ***Family to Family*** agency-specific documents (often examples of effective community-based organizations' local networking efforts), as well as research and theoretical documents that discuss organizing effective community services and empowering communities to address their own needs. Many of the research and initiative-specific references also contain detailed bibliographies that provide a useful resource for further study. Documents that derive directly from the ***Family to Family*** initiative are asterisked.


*Asociacion Puertorriquenos En Marcha," Inc. *1995 Annual Report*, Philadelphia, Pa.

The annual report of a large, multi-service agency that has served the Puerto Rican/Latino community in Philadelphia for over 25 years illustrates the range of interrelated services that can evolve through a community-based organization. APM has a broad-based board that includes community business people, professionals, community residents and recipients of service. The agency has a clearly articulated mission to improve the quality of life in the Latino community through services, advocacy, and economic development. The agency's direct service programs for Children and Youth include Services to Children in Their Own Homes, Adoption Services, Family Foster Care, Youth Emergency Shelter, Wrap Around, Family Preservation, and Family-to-Family. Other agency services include three mental health clinics, community living arrangements, drug and alcohol counseling and treatment services for both adults and youth, transitional housing for former D&A clients, AIDs prevention and education services, including primary medical care, community case management, family services and child abuse prevention early intervention, emergency food and shelter, medical clinics, and day care.

Barthel, Joan, *The Promise of Family Preservation*, Edna McConnell Clark Foundation, New York, New York, 1992

This publication outlines the family preservation program from historical, operational, funding and public policy perspectives. The primary emphasis – on prevention of unnecessary placement through immediate, intensive, in-home services – is described in relation to the values underlying family preservation and its goal of accomplishing practical outcomes for the family. The documented success of family preservation within the child welfare system is attributed to the distinctive design principles. Use/adaptation of the family preservation approach where substance abuse, juvenile justice or mental health issues are present is specifically discussed.

Bruner, Charles, *Realizing a Vision for Children, Families, and Neighborhoods: An Alternative to Other Modest Proposals*, National Center for Service Integration, Child and Family Policy Center, Des Moines, Iowa, 1996

This paper calls for a new, coherent vision and policy to be created at the national level concerning the well-being of children




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Bruner points out that what is already known in the field about causes of the worsening conditions for vulnerable children and families and what is known about creating the essential conditions related to high rates of success provide a sufficient basis for concerted action. He challenges reformers at all levels of involvement to work together to formulate and implement this vision in order to succeed with children for whom current systems fail. The paper reviews the dimensions of the problem and elements of success, and suggests new roles and responsibilities for all engaged in the reform process.

Annie E. Casey Foundation, *The Path of Most Resistance: Reflections on Lessons Learned from New Futures*, Baltimore, Maryland, 1995

New Futures, which began in 1988, was the Annie E. Casey Foundation's first long-term, multi-site initiative aimed at reforming policies and improving services to prepare urban high school youth for a successful transition to adult life. The reflections in this booklet are those of the foundation staff who worked with the project, and describe what the Foundation learned about structuring and managing large initiatives in the New Futures experience. This self-assessment of the role of the Foundation and the successes and failures that were part of the project has been used in designing and implementing subsequent initiatives. The publication offers observations on the various aspects of comprehensive system reform strategies that can easily be related to other efforts in building resourceful communities.

* Annie E. Casey Foundation, "Building Bridges for Families in Cuyahoga County," *Focus*. The article describes the efforts of the ***Family to Family*** initiative in Cuyahoga County, Ohio.

Center for the Study of Social Policy, "Building a Community Agenda: Developing Local Governing Entities," Washington, D.C., September, 1991

This paper summarizes the need for new local collaborative processes in service systems for children and families and presents the role of local governing bodies in effective comprehensive community service strategies. Approaches to the organization, authority and auspices of these coordinating bodies are outlined, and the issues involved in creating a relevant entity that alters existing decisionmaking, performance measurement and funding processes in the local service system are discussed. The concept of local governance is presented as a way local communities can make the various state and federally supported initiatives respond to local priorities and individual needs, resulting in better frontline services to children and families.

Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, and Illinois Department of Rehabilitation Services, *Getting Connected: How to Find Out About Groups and Organizations in Your Neighborhood*, Evanston, Illinois

This booklet, prepared as part of the Community Life Project, is a "how-to" guide to identifying the groups and associations that may be present in a city neighborhood. The publication identifies three methods: using local newspapers and existing directories, interviewing people at local institutions (libraries, churches), and surveying local residents. It provides an index of associations identified in one neighborhood using these methods.



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• Cuyahoga County (Ohio) Department of Children and Family Services, "Request for Proposal for Neighborhood Foster Care Services," Cleveland, Ohio, 1994

This RFP calls for significant change in the way the county operates its foster care program, which traditionally placed children where a home was available, most often not in close proximity to the natural family. The RFP encompasses the principles of ***Family to Family*** services in calling for the development of foster care programs that recruit homes in the same neighborhood as the children coming into placement. It also calls for the use of community supports in working with the foster parents and natural families.

Farrow, Frank, *Child Protection: Building Community Partnerships*, John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1997

The JFK School convened a working group of public and private child welfare administrators, elected officials, judges, advocates, academics and experts to meet regularly over three years to examine new work in the field of child protective services. The paper that resulted is based on this group's proposal that the child protective services agency (CPS) should be in partnership with a broad array of community agencies, organizations and individuals in assuming this critical function. The paper focuses on the stages through which communities may progress in determining and effecting a change in the way child protective services are provided. These include coming to consensus on the direction for change, developing the supports and services that can provide a differential response to each child's situation, changing policy and practice in the official CPS agencies, and establishing community governance and accountability for child protection.

McKnight, John L., *The Careless Society: Community and Its Counterfeits*, Basic Books, New York, New York, 1995

In this book, McKnight argues that reforming human service institutions will not heal dispirited and failing communities, but that these communities must be allowed to recognize and use their innate ability to heal themselves from within. McKnight charges that communities have been "invaded" or colonized by professionalized services, which overwhelm and foster the dependency they are intended to dispel. He provides a clear definition of community and identifies the associations/tools that can be used to regenerate a competent community. McKnight's analysis and discussion look at the professional and political investments in providing help, and specifically discuss the health care, human service and criminal justices systems in this context.

McKnight, John L., "Regenerating Community," Center for Urban Affairs and Policy Research, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois

This is the concluding chapter of the book described above as presented as the keynote address at a National Search Conference of the Canadian Mental Health Association. The article concisely presents the conclusions of McKnight's analysis and recommendations for the future.

North American Council on Adoptable Children, *A Framework for Foster Care Reform: Policy and Practice to Shorten Children's Stays*, November, 1996

The authors comprehensively review the development and operation of the current foster care system, which consistently results in extended stays in foster care and increased use of out-of-home placement for children. The focus is specifically on children in placement for longer than 18 months. System

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barriers and solutions are presented and discussed, and a practical framework for system change from legislative, policy, funding, program management and operations perspectives is offered. The process for development of these strategies included a series of focus groups involving practitioners, parents and researchers.

O'Brien, Raymond, Pittman, Karen and Hafets, David, *Building Supportive Communities for Youth: Local Approaches to Enhancing Community Youth Services and Supports*, Center for Youth Development and Policy Research, Academy for Educational Development, Washington, D.C. 1992

This paper summarizes a research project that examines strategies for achieving a coordinated effort to improve the scope, quality, and availability of community supports for youth. The first phase of the project identified "promising communities," and in the process raised definitional issues regarding characteristics of communities, which are discussed. The second phase of the project involved case studies of localities that had innovative youth services strategies in place. The initiatives are concretely described in the context of the elements of a strong, effective community initiative, which involve multiple actors and multiple solutions in serving adolescents. Both locally and externally driven examples are included.

*Philadelphia Department of Human Services and Youth Services, Inc., *Resource Guide 1996: A list of organizations and agencies in Southwest Philadelphia (zip code 19143) which offer diverse services to its residents*, Philadelphia, Pa. *[Note: Many **Family to Family** sites developed local resource guides for specific neighborhoods/communities. This is an excellent example of one such resource. These guides/resource books were developed as an initial step in the process to help individuals and families connect to local advocates and services.]*

A comprehensive listing of service agencies and local organizations compiled through the ***Family to Family*** effort in Southwest Philadelphia, Pa., this guide is user-friendly to both agencies and individuals. The directory lists the name, address, telephone number and contact person for each organization, as well as the types of programs or services, referral process and fee information. The directory is categorically organized, and is broadly inclusive of resources that contribute to support of families.

U.K. Department of Health, *Child Protection: Messages from Research*, HMSO, London, England, 1995

This document summarizes the key results of 20 research studies conducted in England to examine various aspects of service provision and decisionmaking in child protective services. The research looks at the way abuse is defined, the process of protecting children and at the effects and side effects of interventions by protective services agencies. The book includes exercises that can be used as learning tools in training frontline staff.

U.S. General Accounting Office, *Community Development: Comprehensive Approaches Address Multiple Needs but Are Challenging to Implement*, GAO/RCED/HEHS-95-96, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

This report examines the use of multifaceted, comprehensive approaches to community development that rely on residents' participation to improve conditions in disadvantaged neighborhoods. The report studies four organizations in four cities where community-based efforts were characterized by residents' participation in planning and decisionmaking, use of multiple funding sources, collaboration to leverage resources, and established priori-



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ties consistent with community needs. Each case study describes a comprehensive approach to meet the challenges of the multiple needs of the residents in the areas of housing, social services and economic development. The discussion stresses the effectiveness of a comprehensive, community-based approach to these complex and interrelated problems.

Woodson, Robert L., *A Summons to Life: Mediating Structures and the Prevention of Youth Crime*, American Enterprise Institute, Ballinger Publishing Co., Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1981

Woodson's central argument is that successful strategies for addressing youth problems must include helping to empower families and communities to solve their own problems. The role of family, neighborhood, and community-based organizations is shown as one of "mediating structures" – structures that provide the key to addressing problems and restoring the community at large. Policy and planning implications are discussed, both in terms of how present centralized efforts often undermine indigenous strengths in local communities and in terms of changing policy directions to use a community's undeveloped potential of formal and informal institutions.

Woodstock Institute, *Rediscovering Local Associations and Their Powers: Tools and Methods*, 1995

Methods and tools for identifying and assessing local groups are presented, and the "associational life" of the Grand Boulevard neighborhood in Chicago is described in detail. Community leaders were involved in developing the tools and processes, and in identifying the type of information to be collected and its potential use. A three-step process evolved – gathering available written material, interviewing local leaders and "mapping" the community, and conducting targeted telephone surveys. This produced a snapshot that identifies some 320 local associations. The associations were further surveyed to determine what functions they fulfilled and which of their activities affected the wider community.

# APPENDICES

**Appendix 1.** "Regenerating Community," John McKnight.

**Appendix 2.** Cuyahoga County, "Request for Proposal."

**Appendix 3.** "Criteria for Selecting a F2F Community," Hamilton County.

**Appendix 4.** Baltimore Steering Committee Case Review Form.

**Appendix 5.** Reports from Discussion Groups: Meeting of Hamilton County Child Welfare Staff and Staff of Santa Maria, Hamilton County.

**Appendix 6.** Descriptive Materials re: Santa Fe's ***Family to Family*** efforts to engage the community.

**Appendix 7.** Descriptive Materials re: Santa Fe's school liaison program.

**Appendix 8.** Examples of multi-services available at ***Family to Family*** contracted, community-based agencies.

**Appendix 9.** Examples of jurisdictions "Resource Guides."

**Appendix 10.** "Getting Connected: How to Find Out About Groups and Organizations in Your Neighborhood," Center for Urban Affairs, Northwestern University.

**Appendix 11.** Project Learn materials. Hamilton County.

**Appendix 12.** "Neighborhood Foster Care," Center for Family Life, 1997.

**Appendix 13.** Summary of Benefits of Neighborhood-based Casework.

Copies of the above appendices are available on disk. Please contact John Mattingly, Annie E. Casey Foundation at 410.223.2962 or by e-mail at john@aecf.org.

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